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Spiritan

Haiti
We will not
give up



African bishops assemble

Hoping for a bran nue day

Youth perspectives

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We'll **rise** again from ashes

Pat Fitzpatrick CSSp

The photograph before me captures the good, the bad and the ugly of it all. A teenager with his head wrapped in a gauze bandage. His right eye is partially closed. His right cheek is scarred. Blood still oozes from his right temple. His shoulders are hunched and his T-shirt reveals where that temple blood had found its way down his chest. But there is a determination about those closed lips and that piercing stare from his left eye. He is a survivor.

Astride an east-west fault line, Haiti is no stranger to eruptions. But somehow or other this earthquake was really appalling. Maybe due to the ability of the media to capture and transmit the photos, nothing — ruined buildings, roads piled high with debris, terror-stricken people, the mansions of the rich, the President's Palace, cathedrals, schools, churches, statues, market places — nothing escaped this 45-second heaving in the bowels of the earth.

Spiritans mourn the loss of Collège Saint-Martial in Port-au-Prince. Confiscated in 1964 by Papa Doc Duvalier, one of the most tyrannical of Haiti's tyrants, it was returned to them in 1994 and over the past sixteen years had reestablished itself as a premier Catholic school. Now it lies virtually unusable.

Up in the mountains near Leogane, close to the quake's epicentre, Fondwa University has been totally destroyed. Its founder and current director, Fr Joseph Philippe has spoken in Toronto: "Everything in Fondwa has gone. The infrastructure we had built in 22 years: the Orphanage, the School, the Clinic, the Radio Station, the Sisters' convent, the buildings of Fondwa University — everything has gone. But apart from one seminarian, we are alive and in strong solidarity with our country. Together we will rebuild Fondwa and Haiti."

From neighbouring Dominican Republic, U.S. Spiritan Don McEachin drove overnight to Port-au-Prince in a pick-up truck with food, medicine and water. "The beauty of the

countryside was in sharp contrast to what would follow," he wrote. "There were dead bodies along the side of the roads. Some large buildings had fallen into the streets and made passage difficult. No one was sleeping indoors. There were more film crews than relief efforts.

"Next door in the Dominican Republic we are observing days of mourning. It was striking last night to be outside and not hear music from all directions. Every bar, every store, and most homes play music constantly in the evenings. But now there is absolute silence like I have never heard in my five years here, except maybe on Good Friday."

Where to now?

One of the first instincts of survivors is to pick up the pieces. Drawn back to a home now destroyed, they gaze at it, helpless and silent. In their mind's eye they reconstruct the old dwelling place: "Here's where ..." Then comes the "Where to now?" question launching them towards a God-knows-where destination.

Imagine a better Haiti, a Haiti for all its peoples: women as well as men, children as well as adults, a place at the table for rich and poor, a government for the people and not just for the rich, a truly indigenous church — all tapping into the life-giving beauty and eye-catching colour of the Haitian people.

There is more than Haiti in this issue of *Spiritan*. But Haiti claims centre stage. Already gone from the front pages of newspapers, no longer the lead-off item on nightly newscasts, repair and renewal are under way. And through our Spiritan outreach many collaborators have furthered that work by their contributions and their ongoing prayer.

May there come a Bran Nue Day (another story in our current issue) for this long-suffering, impoverished, denuded Caribbean island and its vibrant, fragile, resilient people. ■



It's not about building back better — but building with a vision created by Haitians.



Formerly all priests came from the middle class. But my generation comes from out there in the slums and from the country. Our way of being priests reflects that new situation. Myself as a priest — I know the problems of these poor people. I come from them.

— Pierre Chery CSSp

Haiti

Sustaining hope in

Bernard Kenol CSSp

Life is so precious and so fragile. Death and life are so close to one another. On January 12, 2010 a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit my native country. It was a tragedy without precedent in our history. I could not believe what I saw in the media. I wanted to think of it as a bad dream. Unfortunately, it was all so real and so graphic.

One of my relatives living in Haiti said to me, “The weird thing is that afterwards you would swear it lasted twenty minutes. It really lasted less than forty seconds. But at that time, it seemed like it would never stop. It just kept getting stronger and stronger.”

Port-au-Prince, my cherished native town

It was so painful and frightening to see the complete collapse of buildings that were reference points in my memories of Port-au-Prince — our national palace, the parliamentary

buildings, the United Nations buildings, the national cathedral, my elementary school, Collège Saint Martial (where my grandfather and uncles were educated) partially destroyed, my cousins’ houses ...

I learned to love my native town with its imperfections and dysfunction. But from now on nothing will be the same.

Chronic injustice and enormous inequality

The Haitian poor have never been considered as human beings with the right to live in dignity. They have been forced to accept their accursed living conditions in slums with frail houses vulnerable to any disaster. 90% live in extreme poverty.

Those in authority have never used their power to bring about a bright future for the Haitian people. Rather, they have used it to make enormous profits and as a weapon of domination and injustice.

For those of us left, right now there is only pain. We have to build again to be able to live together. It must be done in a way that gives rise to solidarity and an open spirit. ... We have a chance to build a better Haiti.

We make ourselves the advocates, supporters and defenders of the weak and the little ones against all who oppress them.

— **Spiritan Rule of Life**



We are trying to be with the poor and for the poor. They need a voice. If you wish to be advocates for the poor, you must deal with the structures that cause their misery. All we ask is that the Haitian people be given a chance to live humanly and decently. In all of this we take the gospel as our guide.

— **Antoine Adrien CSSp 1922-2003**

suffering hearts

How communities rebuild after disaster

However, history gives Haitians reason to hope. In 1751 and 1771 two major earthquakes struck Port-au-Prince. In 1847 Cap-Haitien was demolished. These and other towns have been rebuilt — no matter how poor they were or where they were located. Disasters have brought forth leadership from ordinary Haitians in the hardest hit areas.

When people act they shake off their stupor. Things start moving. Roads are opened up. Order comes to chaos and people start to speak to each other. They begin to have hope. They say, “It’s not going to last like this forever.”

Hope for the future

Yes, in the course of this apocalyptic event, there is hope that Haiti will revive from its ashes and dust. After so many troubles and tragedies the Haitian people remain very resilient and refuse to give up. We continue to sing despite the harsh



Collège Saint Martial now.

Haiti



The women in the markets and the mothers of Haiti are the real symbols of life and the great signs of hope in this country.

— Fr William Smarth

No one ever thought that creating Haiti's first rural university would be a breeze. Making the university of Fondwa work again is going to take sacrifice and determination, but it means too much to the young people of this country for it not to succeed.

— Brian McElroy



difficulties. After this disaster we can give birth to a new Haiti. We can change the face of this country.

In our struggles we are not alone. The response of the international community to the cause of Haiti promises a new beginning. This catastrophic event has touched the hearts and minds of people all around the world. All spheres of international society have been mobilized: government officials, Hollywood, the media, humanitarian organizations and big corporations.

Relief efforts are essential as a first step to save lives, but a serious program of reorientation of our economy needs to be thought through, with an economic plan to respond to the needs of the whole country.

I also hope that we will try to build earthquake-proof buildings in the new Port-au-Prince. This technology is available nowadays.

What needs to be done?

First, we need to establish the rule of law.

Secondly, we need to come up with a long-term economic plan and vision for the future of the country. We will need to rebuild our political, social and religious institutions, get rid of corruption, strengthen our legal system, invest in agriculture

and technology, provide jobs for the people, get Haiti back to life.

Thirdly, we must restore and even improve our educational system. Education is the key. I stress the necessity to rebuild the damaged schools as fast as possible. Education has to focus on creating better citizens, better human beings, qualified people who can use their minds and skills to invent and produce for the country and for the world.

Fourthly, we need to learn from this catastrophe. We need to bury our differences and look up to the motto on which this nation was founded: "L'union fait la force, United we are strong." A change of mentality is necessary. Our government must care for the people. Our economic elite must be less selfish.

Finally, this catastrophe must help us understand that we cannot repeat the same mistakes over and over. We cannot let our past destroy our future. Despite all our differences, personal advantages, or selfish accomplishments, we are all one people.

Our mission as Spiritans

An early picture showed the cathedral in ruins. Many churches in the centre of Port-au-Prince collapsed. The nuncio, Arch-

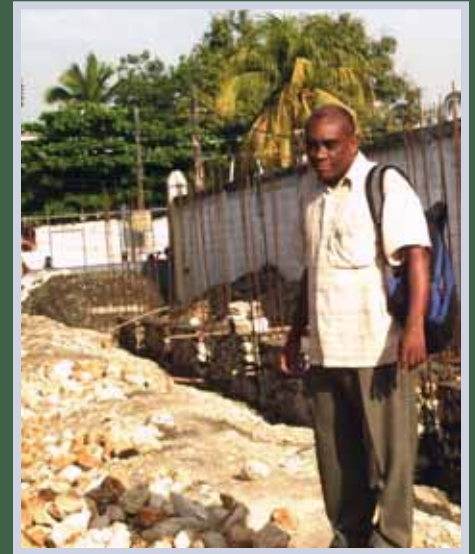


Nothing is more gratifying than to see thousands of children in Haiti eagerly pursuing the education they so obviously cherish.

— Fintan Kilbride

I chose to work alongside the organized poor. If the priest becomes responsible for the project, the enterprise will cease as soon as he is gone. This must remain the people's project. We want them to become as independent as possible.

— Joseph Philippe CSSp



It took a month for international aid to reach us. ... We hire 150 people a week to clear the rubble; we give them a meal. We bought sledgehammers and shovels. We also bought 5,000 pounds of seed — red beans, black beans — because now we are in the planting season. This is therapy. It gives us confidence.

— Joseph Philippe CSSp

bishop Bernardito Azzuza said: "...it will take decades to replace what we have lost." In the long road to recovery, the Catholic Church and all the Christian Churches have to play a crucial role. But what happens when those very institutions are victims of the earthquake?

I believe the answer is *we have to sustain hope in the hearts of suffering Haitians*. The Haitian people are very

We cannot let our past destroy our future. Despite all our differences ... we are all one people.

religious and the church is the heart of their community. Their resilient spirit has always been their best resource.

Our Spiritan confreres are living a major challenge, a challenge that is probably similar to the crisis they experienced when President Duvalier expelled them from Haiti in the 1960s. They are trying to work for the Haitian people by being present among them.

I know that some fund-raising initiatives for Collège Saint Martial have already started. Considering the need for education, such initiatives have to be greatly encouraged. What will happen with Fondwa University?

Love — the force that will help us triumph

But also I ask you, don't forget us in your prayer. I remind you that Fr Libermann, who brought the Holy Ghost group back to life, used to be so enthusiastic for challenging missions. What would be his attitude or behaviour if he were with us now? I leave that for your reflection.

Love is the supreme expression of our faith. Love is our vocation. Love overcomes all fears. Love is a call to heroism. Love suffers the assault of doubts but perseveres in its mission. Love was the deepest motivation of Jesus' mission. Love summarizes the whole law. Especially in these days of sorrow, love is the force that will help us triumph over all obstacles. The reconstruction of Haiti is a challenging task that demands from us a great amount of fearless love! ■

Bernard Kenol gave this talk to the Spiritans on the feast of Francis Libermann, February 2, 2010

A record to be proud of

Ronan White CSSp



“Almost five years in Nampula and I still haven’t been robbed, not even once!” That was my proud boast at table to my colleagues recently — the same colleagues who had warned me on the day of my arrival: “You have now entered the City of Thieves. They’ll take the eye out of your head here if you’re not watching it. Assume that they are all thieves until proven otherwise.”

Thus I was extremely proud of my record.

That is until a few days ago...

On that particular day I was heading home from work on a suffocatingly hot afternoon in a *chapa*.

Chapas are local taxis — small vans habitually overcrowded with people, animals, and a colourful variety of food-stuffs.

Embedded in the back corner

We were 24 passengers crammed into the sizzling 12-seater — all sweating profusely. I was embedded in the back corner, with a burly lady squashed on my lap and a young man pressed up against my right side. The window on my left mercifully allowed in a draught of fresh air to counteract the stifling heat produced by our sweating bodies and the overpowering stench of a number of chickens flapping wildly and defecating liberally.

Chapa drivers would put their Formula One counterparts to shame with the perilous manoeuvres they regularly perform. Only the passengers constantly feel the brunt of these actions, being tossed about in the back like confetti as the *chapas* race wildly through the city streets competing with each other for the customers waiting by the roadsides.

The passengers are unprotected, leaning forward, leaning back, all crushed together on these madcap daily journeys. But no one gets too upset — all in a day’s work.

A mad meander

On this particular ride, as we came off the city’s only roundabout at terminal velocity, the entire passenger mass was slammed up against the left side of

the *chapa*. The lad to my right ended up on top of me, lodged between myself and the roof. With the *chapa* continuing to meander madly, I paid no attention to his hands around my waist and pocket area as he calmly detached himself from me.

The journey continued and commuters and fowl gradually got off at their stops, creating some space and allowing some cool air and comfort to enter. As we were approaching my stop — by this stage there were only about five of us left in the *chapa* — I put my hand in my pocket to retrieve my coin for the fare. The coin was gone — and so was the lad who had been seated to my right!

I was furious — furious with the young lad for robbing me, but even more furious with myself for allowing myself to be robbed so easily. I now faced the problem of having to negotiate with the fare collector. These collectors have zero tolerance towards people who jump into their *chapas* without money.

Go barefoot

The collector insisted that I leave my flip-flops with him; I could exchange them for the price of the fare an hour later, when he would return on his next trip. As there was quite a walk from the stop to our house on baking hot sand and stone, I was extremely reluctant to hand over my footwear.

A debate ensued, in which all remaining passengers took part, with neither the conductor nor I conceding an inch. It came to a peaceful conclusion when an old man, dressed in rags, offered to pay for me. He gave me a big smile, paid the collector and then shuffled off at his stop without another word.

We continued the short distance to my stop and just as I was jumping off, the fare collector tapped me on the shoulder. I turned to see him pointing towards the back of the *chapa*. Following the line of his finger I saw my shiny coin glistening on the seat. It must have fallen out of my pocket during one of the frenzied swerves and slipped underneath me. Grinning, he went down to the back, picked up the coin and tossed it to me.

Only one thief

My proud record was still intact, but I walked home feeling ashamed of myself. I hadn't been robbed, yet I wrongly assumed someone had robbed me. An old man, who clearly had very little money, paid for me without being asked. And the fare collector, who could easily have slipped my coin into his own pocket, returned it happily to me.

There was only one thief on that journey and that was me — robbing the people of their goodness and humanity by assuming that they were “all thieves until proven otherwise”. In fact, it was an ongoing thievery I had been committing since I arrived here.

The statistic of never being robbed here is no longer of any importance to me. I hope and pray that some day I will have a record of not robbing others of their humanity. That indeed would be something to be proud of. ■

Courtesy of *Outlook*, Dublin.



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Disturb Us, Lord

Disturb us, Lord, when
We are too well pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true
Because we have dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely
Because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when
With the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst
For the waters of life;
Having fallen in love with life,
We have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth,
We have allowed our vision
Of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,
To venture on wider seas
Where storms will show your mastery;
Where losing sight of land,
We shall find the stars.

We ask You to push back
The horizons of our hopes;
And to push us into the future
In strength, courage, hope, and love.

— *Attributed – Sir Francis Drake – 1577*

Still hoping in a Bran Nue Day

Bill Christie CSSp

For one hot Saturday it was the year 1965 again inside Beagle Bay's Sacred Heart Church. Ladies, wearing pill-box hats and gloves, stood and fanned themselves next to men in brightly checked shorts made of rayon. The Church was full — at least the north side was. The south was full of cameras and boom mikes and play back machines and hair-dressers and lights and lights and more lights. A choir stood by the altar and sang. A preacher stood and called the people to prayer.

For a day I saw what it must have been like when Beagle Bay and Sacred Heart Church were the centre of religious life for the Aboriginal people of northwest Australia. When people had hope in a Brand New Day breaking like the dawn from on high. When their feet knew where they stood and their eyes knew where they were looking. When the future was bright like sunlight reflected from the chrome fins of majestic cars gliding like sharks on currents of newly paved roads.

But at four in the afternoon the assistant director called the day a “wrap” and it all vanished. Lights, lights and still more lights went into one truck and sound equipment into another.

The choir packed it in. The preacher took off his robes and became a working actor again, asking what the call sheet had listed for tomorrow.

People turned in their costumes, returned to the shorts and t-shirts of their daily lives and then went home for the day.

They even took their rubbish with them, including the seven empty cans of hairspray that had been whipped out at every break in the shooting to keep the beehive hairdos arching to the sky.

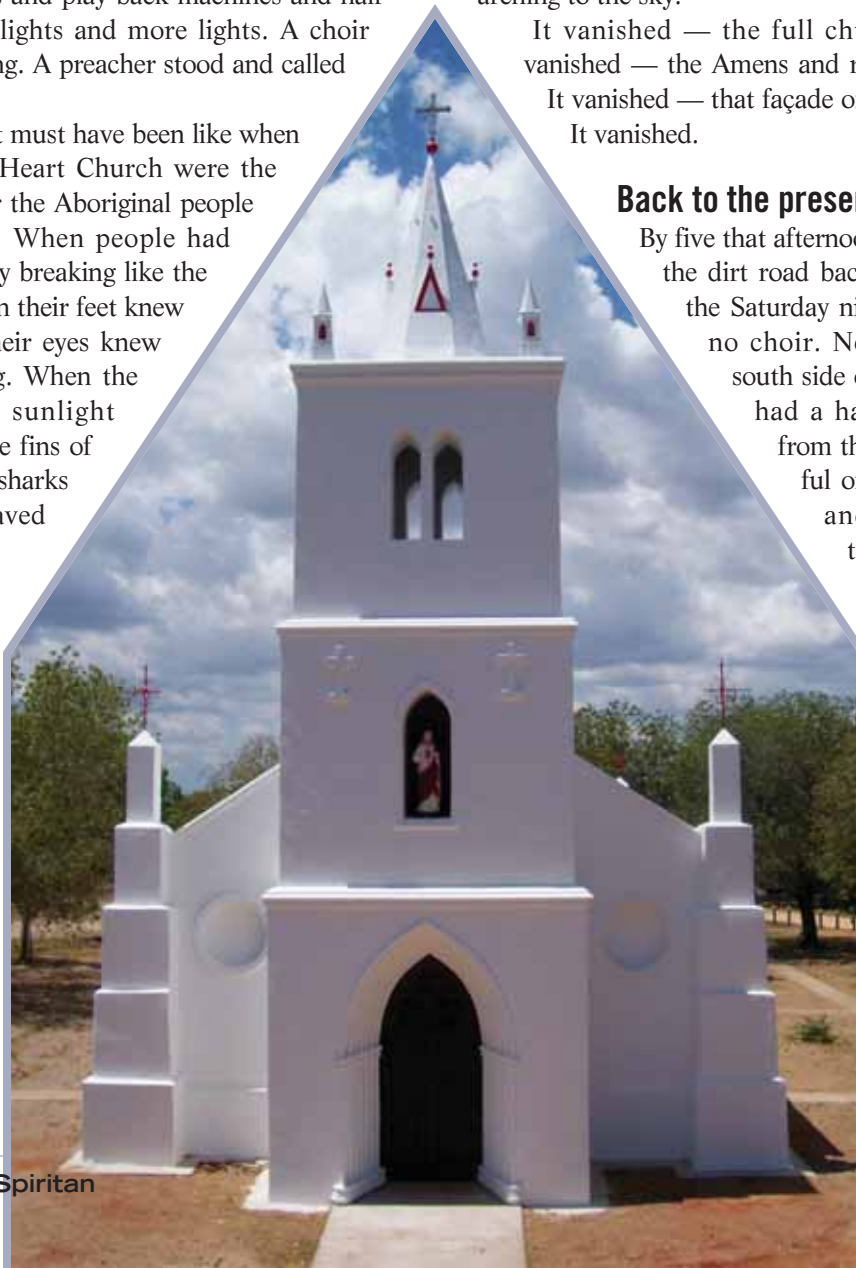
It vanished — the full church and the singing. It vanished — the Amens and roar of the black preacher.

It vanished — that façade of hope in a brand new day. It vanished.

Back to the present

By five that afternoon the last truck was down the dirt road back to town and we started the Saturday night vigil Mass. There was no choir. Neither the north nor the south side of the church was full. We had a handful of white teachers from the Catholic school, a handful of local folks, mostly older, and a few little kids with their grandmothers. No more than fifteen in total.

And we prayed. Not fake movie prayers. No, we prayed real prayers for real people with very real problems. The Amen was muted. It was more like a groan than a roar, but it carried real faith, faith that had



Sacred Heart Church,
Beagle Bay.

been shaken and tattered, but had still hung on stubbornly.

Jimmy Chi, a local man from this remote northwest corner of Australia, wrote *Bran Nue Day* (Brand New Day) in the late 1980s when Aborigines were fighting for land rights, citizenship and equal rights. It was also the day they would throw off the mantle of the Church's authority over them.

Sacred Heart Mission was created in the 1880s. French Trappist monks, the first to serve the mission, were replaced by German Pallotine Missionaries in 1901. Soon the mission was home to the local Aborigines and to "half-caste" children taken from their Aboriginal mothers and sent to either government or church-run orphanages. A monastic-style routine pervaded each day.

The wrapping paper, not the prize

In the 1950s the government promised them citizenship and the Church promised them its mission lands. They could set their own course into the second half of the 20th century. They reached for the prize, but got only the wrapping paper. The reins of power were never really handed over. They got back some small part of their land — if someone else was not already using it or if there wasn't anything valuable on it, near it, or under it, then or at some future date.

Cattle stations were handed over to community groups that knew how to drive herds, but knew nothing of overseas markets, exchange rate hedging, or capital expenditures. When the stations went bankrupt the groups were blamed. Many believed that and blamed themselves. Welfare cheques came, together with a government home you could never own — even though the land was yours. A community store was set up. It could sell you bread for \$5 a loaf, baked a month before in a city well over 1,000 kms away, and defrosted that week. You could leave and try your luck in the city competing for a job against its citizens — in their culture, in their language and on their turf.

Recapturing hope

Bran Nue Day is about hope. There isn't much of that around Beagle Bay now. We have pretty much lost a generation to frustration, self-loathing and despair, resulting in alcoholism, drug abuse, violence and suicide. In the late 1980s Jimmy Chi wanted to remind people of the hope they once had and needed again if they were to make a better go of things in the future.



Bill Christie CSSp in front of the altar at Sacred Heart Church.

School, which is at its very root a statement of hope in the future, has only about 50% attendance in our community. Church is more than ever fundamentally centred on faith in a loving and caring God who is active in personal, family and community life. That faith is the basis for real Christian hope — a hope that believes God has been with them and will continue to walk beside them. But that hope now is no stronger than a bruised reed or a smoldering wick.

Why are they reviving Jimmy Chi's play as a major movie? Do I dare say it's about hope again? This year the Prime Minister stood in Parliament and said sorry on behalf of the government and the nation for the injustices carried out upon the Aboriginal people of Australia.

Here in Beagle Bay a new fight has begun for the land and the environment. Huge natural gas reserves have been discovered off our coast. Do we dare to hope?

A Church that stayed

As a Church we stand ready. We're not really sure what our next step will be, but the first battle has been won — we didn't run away when things got bad, when the fabric of the community unraveled and our churches and schools emptied out. We didn't have and still don't have an answer for the violence, but

They reached for the prize, but got only the wrapping paper.

we stayed and nursed the people as best we could. We didn't have and still don't have an answer for the drugs or alcohol, but we've stayed and helped the grandparents cope with children that their own children couldn't care for. Dear God, we have no answer for the young lives lost to suicide, but we've stayed and buried the dead and cried with the living.

We believe in a *Bran Nue Day*. It will come. It must come. The promise ultimately isn't about governments or policies. They can delay the promise and make the journey more painful, but they can't kill the hope. It isn't about alcohol or drugs. They can blur the vision, but not blot it out. Even death can't defeat the promise. For the promise is in God's very self — it is the Sacred Heart of his Son: love poured out for all people — for the people of Beagle Bay always and forever. ■

Courtesy of *One Heart, One Spirit* newsletter, USA Spiritans.

The Odyssey of Life

Always and ever shall I consider myself blessed.

In childhood, gazing out onto the vast plains of Kenya,
I stood mesmerized at Earth's canvas before me:
Herds of gazelle, gnu, giraffe, bands of ostriches.
As they paused in their grazing to raise their eyes to mine,
We stood mutely transfixed recognizing our common bond,
Seeming to recollect that in the dim mist of the past we were kin:
Nomads, roaming freely o'er this Eden,
Each taking only what we needed.
Like a giant orchestra, playing in sweet harmony,
This stupendous Symphony of Life.

Alas! In time, Man's pride in intellect ensnared him.
He thought himself as having 'Dominion' over all creation;
O'er the fish in the water, the fowls of the air, the creatures
Of the land.

Therein lay the sentence to his holocaust,
Jarring Earth's music with dissonance
As a vain virtuoso, wielding giant cymbals,
In disdain of all other instrumentalists.
Man's discordance shattered the flow of Life's melody;
Hushing the sweet strains of many of Earth's creatures
Into eternal silence.
What chord, what melody can issue from a harp with broken strings?

Using religion to justify callousness is a two-edged sword.
Man's offspring hear not the lyrics of the winged ones,
See not the shy timidity in the soft eyes of a gazelle,
Nor the silver swirl of a school of fish;
Sense not a communion with nature.
Self-centred, blind is Man to the purpose of his Lord.
Made in the image of God!

Wherein is man's likeness to the Good Shepherd?
Has he upheld his charge as keeper of the vineyard
Against his Master's sudden return?
Man's self-conceit confounds him.
Deaf to the cries of the distressed that he pursues
On the highway to extinction.

Askance, my eyes raise upwards to the Most High,
Who composed the score of the Grand Symphony of Life,
Arranging parts for every creature:
To Him, whose Dominion is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting
— even to the end of Time —
To the great conductor!
Do thou, once more, speak unto Man thy command,
“Ephphata!” — “Be opened!”

— L. D. Anthony

A mem

Justin Anantawan

Although I was at Huruma Children's Home for only a month, it was a life-changing experience. I went there not quite sure what I was going to do and what I was going to experience. However, upon leaving Kenya I had a closer relationship with God and a better understanding of my calling in life.

The orphanage school did not have a music teacher. For their creative art hour, the kids would go to work in the fields. So, I was put into the temporary role of music teacher during my four-week stay. I taught weekly lessons to nine classes — gospel and children's songs to the younger grades and African-American music history to the older grades.

I was also able to teach the children Negro spirituals such as *Swing Low Sweet Chariot* and *I'll Fly Away*. They now sing these in church.

I saw how music affected their lives. One thing I remember well — it touched me greatly — is a rap a girl wrote about her life as a child labourer.

I also became friends with a girl named Mary Kavata. I taught her songs and she and I sang a couple of duets during the last church service I attended at Huruma. She wants to become a professional musician — it amazed me how she would make us rehearse songs twenty or thirty times until we got them right.

One Sunday a group of the children and I baked 230 cookies for everybody at the home. It took hours to do this because the oven was very small and did not have a lot of heat.

How music helped the children

I made many friends at the home and I try to keep in touch with them. The thing that affected

orable month in Kenya

me most was hearing the stories of these children and how they came to the home. Many of them had lost parents to AIDS, had been abused or abandoned. I saw how music helped them to deal with their pain, express their emotions and simply have fun.

Thus, I have decided that I want to become a missionary music teacher in Africa, or elsewhere in the world, where children do not have the opportunity to get a music education. I felt a calling from God to do this while I was in Kenya and I still feel it now despite my doubts and fears of what will

happen in the future. I am currently applying for Teachers College and I will be doing volunteer music teaching at an elementary school to prepare myself. God willing, I will return to Huruma Children's Home next year to teach again.

I thank the Spiritans for your help in funding my trip to Kenya. As you were part of my journey you were also part of the children's lives at Huruma. God blessed me with an experience that opened my heart and gave me a chance to help others in need and I thank him for people like you who made it possible. ■



Questions

The stories we once told
Our way of life ravaged
My people's faces unrecalled
Covered up by a rope of lies
Unheard by the world

We were forced to fall in line
Dishonoured by fellow man
Exposed, seared and helpless
Together we now lay

All we had was each other —
A connection that cannot be broken
We suffered together!
We cried together!
And we question what will come next

Will the world forget?
Will our stories one day be told?
Will I be forgotten?
Will we be forgotten?

— *Michael Gaa, Neil McNeil*

Along a path unsought and unknown

Lcky Flanagan CSSp

October 1980: touch down in Chileka airport, Malawi. Even before the door opened the steaming heat enveloped me. I knew I was no longer in Canada or Ireland. No! I was in Malawi, “The Warm Heart of Africa” as the tourist slogan puts it. “Warm?” “Sizzling,” would be more accurate.

After the slow-moving line-ups for documents and baggage, I was hugged and welcomed. Then whisked away to Ndirande Spiritan parish, Blantyre (the largest city). To a cold shower, a hearty meal (with some unfamiliar dishes), drinks and sharing of news and doings. Later I wondered did I hear: “October is the hottest month?” If it was, then there was hope. Yet I pondered, as I lay down under the mosquito net, “What have I done with my life?” “What indeed...?”

When I joined the Spiritans, my expectation was to work in Africa or Brazil. Now I had the opportunity to realize this teenage longing. Like Steinbeck in *Travels with Charley*, I saw in myself “what I was to see many times in others — a look of longing.”

After six years in Canada, the Canadian prairie fall began to rule over the summer evenings as the rounds of leave-taking ran their course. Separation was inevitable from a loved and loving parish community, where I was cared for and blessed: tears flowed, not least my own, as I departed with an ache in my heart.

Farewell Canada

Yes — Coaldale continued to have a hold on me. It was the parish, which back in secondary school in Kildare, Ireland, Br. Finbarr had set me up for, when he pondered aloud one February day in 1959: “Flanagan, you would make a grand parish priest in a nice quiet country parish!” A chord was struck, and as the vibration continued it caused me to

question and ponder. I heard him say: “There is more in you than you see in yourself.”

Was it God talk? Later I came to believe it was true — God really sees more in us than we see in ourselves. It was indeed a blessed moment of freedom and focus in my life. Yes! Scary too, as I began to reach out to take hold of “the vibration”: the growing discovery of embarking on a journey of risk and challenge, on a pilgrimage of mustering trust and giving birth to the “inner being.”

I pray that the Father out of his glorious riches may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to



The seminary chapel in Balaka, Malawi.



Fr Locky interacting with seminarians.

know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work in us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus in all generations forever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:16-21)

This prayer of Paul I treasure since 1973 on a handmade and exquisitely written ordination card from three reverend sister friends. It highlights for me the loving contribution of many relatives, friends and parishioners in various parishes, not least my native Kildare. For all, living and dead, my ongoing prayer and gratitude, for you are the community who nourished my vocation.

A vocation

It may all sound like God talk: “a revelatory moment,” “inner being,” “a priest comes from the people for the people.” Yet it was to become the compass for setting my sights along a path unsought and unknown. There has to be “Someone” else involved, it can’t be just my idea or that of a teacher or significant person or experience or whatever in one’s life. For sure, vocation is the plan of God. Initially it covers one in much uncertainty as one seeks to figure out what is from me in all of this and what is from God who calls. I have no doubt that entering into the vocation of marriage involves similar elements.

January 2010: Needless to say, my journey to the priesthood bears influence on how I interact with the students here at the seminary (PO Box 221, Balaka, Malawi). The “inner

being,” that hidden goodness awaiting birth in each of us, is linked with the deep desire to serve. St Augustine spoke of it as restlessness in one’s heart which only God can fill. To love as God loves, not likely having to die for someone, but practicing sacrificial love and service in other ways: listening, helping, encouraging, giving — in particular among the marginalized, neglected, voiceless.

During this year dedicated by Pope Benedict to priests, with the theme *Faithfulness of Christ, Faithfulness of Priests*

**We know that not all become priests,
yet we believe that each one is called
to make a difference.**

we Spiritans count on your kind prayers and support, as we pray and encourage our students to become faithful and godly men. We know that not all become priests, yet we believe that each one is called to make a difference. Hence, besides philosophy, we emphasize human and community development, religious and social studies, servant leadership skills coupled with ministry to youth, the sick and the elderly in area villages.

You, for sure, are most welcome into partnership with us and are assured of remembrance in our daily community Mass and prayer. ■

Tax receipt donations (Memo: Sem-fund) to: Spiritan Bursar, 121 Victoria Park Av., Toronto, Ontario, M4E 3S2.

The Church in Africa: What is the Spirit asking?

Paulinus Odozor CSSp,
Department of Theology, Notre Dame University

1:30 a.m. in Rome. I need some sleep so as to get up in time for Mass at 7:00 a.m. I am one of a group called on to work through the evening and night to produce an English version of the day's proceedings.

9:00 a.m. I continue to be surprised that our document of about 30 pages has been neatly printed and bound by the Vatican Printing Press. This is but one example of the stunning efficiency and attention to detail that characterizes everything here.

I am part of the Second Special Assembly of African Bishops. The working languages of the synod are French, English, Italian and Portuguese. All of us "experts" attend every general session, where we listen attentively and take copious notes. The ideas expressed in our documents eventually become the final propositions which the bishops will vote on by means of electronic voting Yes, No or Abstain.

Sometimes the final edition is a hybrid from ideas originating in one or other of the four language groups. Our group often has difficulty expressing the same ideas with the same clarity in each language.

These propositions, along with other documents presented to the synod, will then go to Pope Benedict to draw up the official Assembly Document.

Small groups

Small group discussions are an essential part of the synod. It is here that ideas circulating in the various reports or at the plenary sessions either get traction through debate and adoption or simply die and are forgotten. The debates have been sometimes heated. But throughout, everyone had as much to say as everyone else. No point of view has been excluded and no person can complain that he or she was not heard.

The end result of these discussions is to draw up propositions to be sent to the General Secretary and his team to harmonize and bring to the General Assembly for debate.

One of the proofs of the soundness of any proposition is the extent to which it contributes to the overall theme of this synod: *The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace*. People are concerned that the synod not

simply restate ideas that were covered in the first synod on Africa in 1994. This synod calls for new and creative thinking on many issues facing Africa and the Church in Africa today.

Opening Mass

The Synod began with a Mass presided over by the Pope in St Peter's Basilica. In his homily the Pope noted that Africa possessed "a deep sense of God" which made the continent "the repository of an inestimable treasure for the whole world. Africa represents an enormous spiritual 'lung' for a humanity that appears to be in a crisis of faith and hope."

The Pope was quick to warn, however, that this lung can take ill, and that it was at the moment under attack from at least two dangerous viruses: (a) practical materialism: "an illness that the First World continues to export as toxic waste that contaminates the peoples of other continents, in particular those of Africa"; (b) religious fundamentalism, mixed with political and economic interests: "groups who follow various religious creeds are spreading throughout the continent of Africa. They do so in God's name, but teach and practice, not love and respect for freedom, but intolerance and violence."

Down to work

When the work of the synod began in earnest it was obvious that the participants were prepared to give of their best in finding solutions to Africa's problems.

The first task was to identify the various factors that were destabilizing Africa. The second task was for the Church to seek ways to address these, either on its own or, where necessary, with other religious and civic entities in Africa and all around the world.

There was the recognition that Africa's greatest assets are its peoples and that the Church must increase and improve its efforts at harnessing this most important resource. In this regard, the synod spent a considerable amount of time discussing the role of women in society and the importance of a well-educated and well-formed laity as agents of change in African societies.

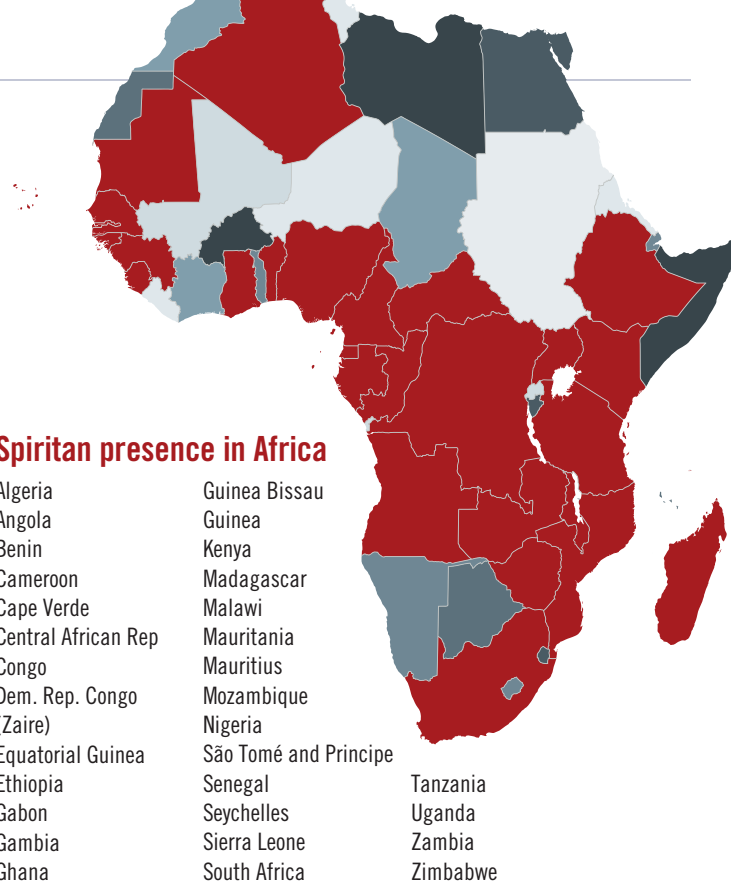
Women, Leadership, Credibility of the Church

Women spoke out very clearly and very loudly at this synod. One of the women speakers invited the participants to do a two-minute exercise before they went to bed: imagine what a church without women would look like.

She was not even speaking on ordination. She was simply arguing that there were things in the Church and society in Africa and elsewhere that structurally incapacitated women and prevented them from rendering full service in the Church and in society as Christians and able citizens. Many participants spoke on this theme: discussions on the treatment of the girl-child, on the question of some marriage customs in Africa which place undue stress on women, on inheritance rights, on widowed women and the treatment they receive. There was also a lot of soul-searching on how to bring women on board in those areas of leadership and governance that are already legal in canon law, and on how to increase theological and other educational opportunities for women in the African church. The question of trafficking of women was also a concern.

The synod recognized that what Chinua Achebe wrote in *The Trouble with Nigeria* is true of the entire continent as well: the trouble with Africa is leadership. The synod spent a lot of energy wondering what the Church could do to help this situation. The recognition was clear: African Catholic and other Christian public servants are often no better stewards of public trust and treasure than others. It was therefore important for the Church to intentionally grow a well-informed laity that would be more conscious of their role as agents of positive change in Africa and effectively work to bring peace, justice and reconciliation all through the continent.

The synod was very aware that, as Paul VI put it long ago, preaching alone does not move people anymore. The world is moved by those who live what they preach. How can the Church be an effective and credible agent of reconciliation justice and peace if it is lacking in these qualities and virtues?



Spiritan presence in Africa

Algeria	Guinea Bissau
Angola	Guinea
Benin	Kenya
Cameroon	Madagascar
Cape Verde	Malawi
Central African Rep	Mauritania
Congo	Mauritius
Dem. Rep. Congo (Zaire)	Mozambique
Equatorial Guinea	Nigeria
Ethiopia	São Tomé and Príncipe
Gabon	Senegal
Gambia	Seychelles
Ghana	Sierra Leone
	South Africa
	Tanzania
	Uganda
	Zambia
	Zimbabwe

How the Spirit speaks

Whenever I think of the synodal process as I saw it, I find myself thinking about inspiration. Christians believe that scripture is sacred because it is the word of God inspired by the Spirit of God. The same Spirit who spoke through the prophets is still with the Church and guides it in search of the truth. The process is not easy. In fact it can sometimes be downright messy.

After this synod I think I am a bit closer to understanding how the Spirit continues to speak through the prophets. Consider this: From the time the idea of this synod was put out, the Church of God all over Africa and beyond became involved in

A small, peaceful Christian presence

The Archbishop of Niamey, Niger, should have been present at the Synod in Rome. He was unable to attend because he was invited as a key mediator in the conflict between the government and the Tuareg rebels. Niger is a country 98% Muslim, and 1% Christian.

As a small Church, part of an even smaller Christian presence in the Gambia, a predominantly Muslim country, the theme of this Synod is a further challenge for us to become a sign and instrument for bringing about justice, peace, and mutual respect among the various tribal, social and religious factors that constitute the fabric of Gambian society.

The particular way in which we in Africa can witness to this call, at this moment in its history, is by being servants or instruments of reconciliation. This is a key that can open the door to peace and justice. Many years ago, a renowned theologian declared: no world peace without world religions working together.

We believe that education at all levels is one way in which we can help to achieve this by underlining the religious and moral values common to Islam and Christianity — in spite of the obstacles that confront us.

Robert Ellison CSSp, Bishop of Banjul, The Gambia

Practising justice peace and reconciliation

Mgr Wiehe and I spoke about the family — a concern common to our islands and many dioceses in Africa. Many African families in countries at war are subject to ill-treatment by mercenaries. The Church in Africa is called to bring concrete and constant support to these families who suffer so much.

During the synod, African bishops acknowledged with dignity the woes and difficulties of many African countries. They severely condemned the plundering of Africa by Western multinationals, but they confessed that this plundering could not be done without the collaboration of local personalities. They also strongly denounced tribalism as a cause of division in several countries and sometimes in the Church as well. They spoke too about witchcraft and its dire consequences: destruction of families, lynching of individuals.

The great lesson I draw from this synod is the crucial importance of the prophetic role of the Church. The Church has the duty to recall time and again that peace and justice are gifts of God. Based on this hope, a prophetic Church remains alert and encourages all initiatives in the fields of social justice, peace and reconciliation. The Church has to be thankful for these initiatives and celebrate them as gifts of God.

This prophetic role also consists in denouncing all obstacles to social justice, peace and reconciliation: denouncing not only the symptoms but the root causes of injustice and poverty. Last but not least, to be prophetic means to practice justice in our own environment, to work for peace and reconciliation.

Mgr Maurice E. PIAT CSSp Mgr Denis Wiehe CSSp
Bishop of Port-Louis Bishop of Port-Victoria
Mauritius Seychelles

a search for the truth about itself and about the direction the Spirit was leading it. First, there was the extensive sounding at the local and grassroots levels concerning the theme and issues to be discussed. This led to the drawing up of the Working Document. It in turn became the subject of a lot of theological and popular reflection in many Churches of Africa. Many bishops or Bishops Conferences came to Rome armed with a lot of insight from these discussions and their own insights as well.

Then for three weeks in Rome the Bishops and other participants prayed and reflected together in order to hear more clearly what the Spirit was asking of the Church in Africa. The search for the voice and light of the Spirit was cumbersome and messy at times, culminating in the drawing up of the

propositions and other texts that have been handed over to the Holy Father.

As the Church awaits the final word from the Pope, the Spirit will already begin to move people to action in ways and directions they may not even be aware of, but which will lead us all closer to the truth.

May our sinfulness and shortsightedness not prevent us from hearing clearly what the Spirit is saying to the Church of Africa and indeed to the entire Church through this synod.

Preaching alone does not move people anymore. The world is moved by those who live what they preach.

Church's self-understanding

A second theological issue I want to highlight is that of the self-understanding of the Church, described in different metaphors: servant, hierarchical community, a communion, the new Israel of God, the people of God, etc. Experience shows that one metaphor is always more operative than others in a given church at any given time. This self-understanding of any particular church determines to a large extent what kind of Church you get.

What I experienced at the synod was a Church that understands itself as a leaven or catalyst in line with Jesus' characterization of his community of disciples.

For about three weeks I experienced a church growing in awareness of the great gifts it has been given by God. It has something to offer to Africa and to the world. I also heard a great cry of disappointment at the Church's failure so far to live up to its promise in Africa, for Africa and for the whole world. I heard a Church which was determined as never before to be light and leaven for Africa in cooperation with other African and international entities.

How far will this go? I cannot tell. One thing I am sure of is that the Church in Africa will not be the same after this synod.

Closing Party

When all the talking was done, all the propositions voted on, and all the votes counted, we all went down for a party with the Holy Father. Great food, great wine, great conversation, great hopes that we can unleash the enormous human resources of the African church as forces for positive transformation in Africa.

At the concluding Mass I raised my voice loudly and clearly in prayer with others to the Spirit who continues to speak to his Church today. I know he will not let us sleep in peace again without accomplishing what we have all been sent to do for Africa and for the children of God everywhere, that they may have life and have it to the full. ■

They speak of a God who thunders, but I have met a God who soars and floats and ripples in the moist air. And again I know: I am a feather on the breath of God.

Mary Malone



If you knew I was hungry you would do everything you could to help me. If you knew I need clothing, you would do all you could to help me. But for some people, if they can't eat they don't have anyone to help them. If they don't have clothes or if they can't send their children to school, or they can't pay their rent, they can't do anything. They are alone... That is why I try to use all of my contacts and resources to help others.

Joseph Philippe CSSp

Everything we have, we receive. Everything is gift. Our responsibility is, first, to receive the gift; second, to foster and cherish it so that it shapes our lives; third, to pass it on, to recycle it — and our lives — for the benefit of others.

Anthony Gittins CSSp



In Palman, Santa Cruz, where the streets have no names, neither do the children. They sometimes don't name a child until at least four or five. No point in getting attached. 1 in 5 little ones does not make six years.

Eugene Harrington



The visions we offer our children shape the future. It matters what those visions are. Often they become self-fulfilling prophecies. Dreams are maps.

Carl Sagan

Mourning is one thing. Making sure life triumphs over destruction is the focus.

Michaëlle Jean

Volunteer with VICS — and make a difference!

Daniel Abba CSSp

Click VICS on Google and you're immediately challenged: ***Volunteer with VICS — and make a difference!***

Since its beginnings in the early 1970s VICS has made a huge difference — to its own members and to thousands of people across the world. It has enticed many young adults, women and men, to join its ranks, to learn something of its way of life and then to go and be of help to others. Through personal contact, the VICS staff is aware of the needs and hopes of people across the globe. It is seldom the case that a new arrival is turned away because the right pairing can't be found.

First time volunteers are inclined to come with the idea, "I'll be able to help others and I'd like to do that." True — and that indeed does happen. What also happens is that the volunteer gains as much as those to whom he or she is sent. He teaches them; they teach him. She nurses them; they nurse her. Together they make a difference in each other's life.

So the VICS invitation on Google continues:

Change your life TRAVEL Change your life TEACH Change your life LEARN Change your life LIVE

Fr Daniel Abba is the fourth Spiritan priest to be named Director of VICS. He succeeds Frs Desmond McGoldrick, Dermot Doran and Bob Colburn. Two Irish-born, one Canadian-born and now one Nigerian-born.

Born in the North Central Nigerian state of Kogi, I joined the Spiritans after my Secondary School education in 1984. I made my first profession in November of 1986 and proceeded to study Philosophy at the Spiritan School of Philosophy near Nsukka. I then attended the Spiritan International School of Theology from 1990 to 1994. On completion of those theological studies, I was ordained to the priesthood on the 9th July, 1994.

Having been appointed to serve in South Africa after my priestly ordination, I had to learn to speak Zulu before taking up that Parish appointment. At the end of that 'adult education', I was assigned to St. Peter's Parish in Harrismith, a medium sized conservative town in the "Orange Vrystaat".

This Parish, like every community in South Africa then, was divided across racial lines. So was the South African Church. But then an election led to a multiracial parliament.

A new South Africa emerged from apartheid. "Building a new community" became the language. But it was a difficult language to learn. I saw myself with a mission to lead a Church that was Catholic and integrated. No assignment has been more challenging. But the goodness of people showed how quickly we got the job done. I am glad to know that our

community continues to be a stellar example for communities in that part of South Africa.

I went on to spend a total of thirteen years in South Africa, serving in two other parishes with pride and dedication. One does not count achievements, but I am glad when I go back to those places now and people report that what we did continues to bear fruit even today. In all of these, I give glory to God.

Meeting VICS for the first time

During those years in South Africa, I came across Robert Colburn who was director of Volunteer International Christian Service (VICS). It was a meeting that was to change my mission and my life. Bob invited me to visit Canada in 2005. It was clear that he was trying to entice me to join the Spiritan province of TransCanada, and in particular, to become involved with VICS. During that time in South Africa, I was already beginning to be part of VICS in small ways.

I was planning to go on sabbatical in 2007, and because of the relationship that had developed between Bob, VICS and me, it was normal that I would come to Canada to gradually get involved in that part of Spiritan mission. It was a beautiful idea — even though not all of the plans came to be.

If I was going to be in charge of VICS it was important for me to know my host community. What better way than to work directly with the people. I was assigned to St. Thomas More Parish on the South side of Edmonton where I served for two years as associate pastor. There I experienced the beauty, warmth and friendliness of Canadian people. There I learned to be Canadian – be friendly, go out to dinner, eat lots of dessert because ... life is too short. Even though I continue to enjoy the friendship and generosity of the people of that community, I have a new mission. I came to work with VICS. That is my new direction in life.

VICS is an organization founded to give lay professional people of whatever faith an opportunity to share in the Spiritan mission to the developing world. It is a mission that has

My mission as a Spiritan is to those who are in need, and if I am able to do that through VICS, as I think I can, then glory be to God.

been in my heart as a Spiritan, but has taken on an even deeper commitment as I relate with those men and women who give up years of their lives to “go out into the whole world and proclaim the good news”. This new mission enables me to go and see what we are able to do for those at the margins of society. There are lots of people out there who need to be listened to, to be given a direction for their future. That is what VICS is about, bringing that long awaited good news and much needed help to people in need.

Getting to know the Volunteers

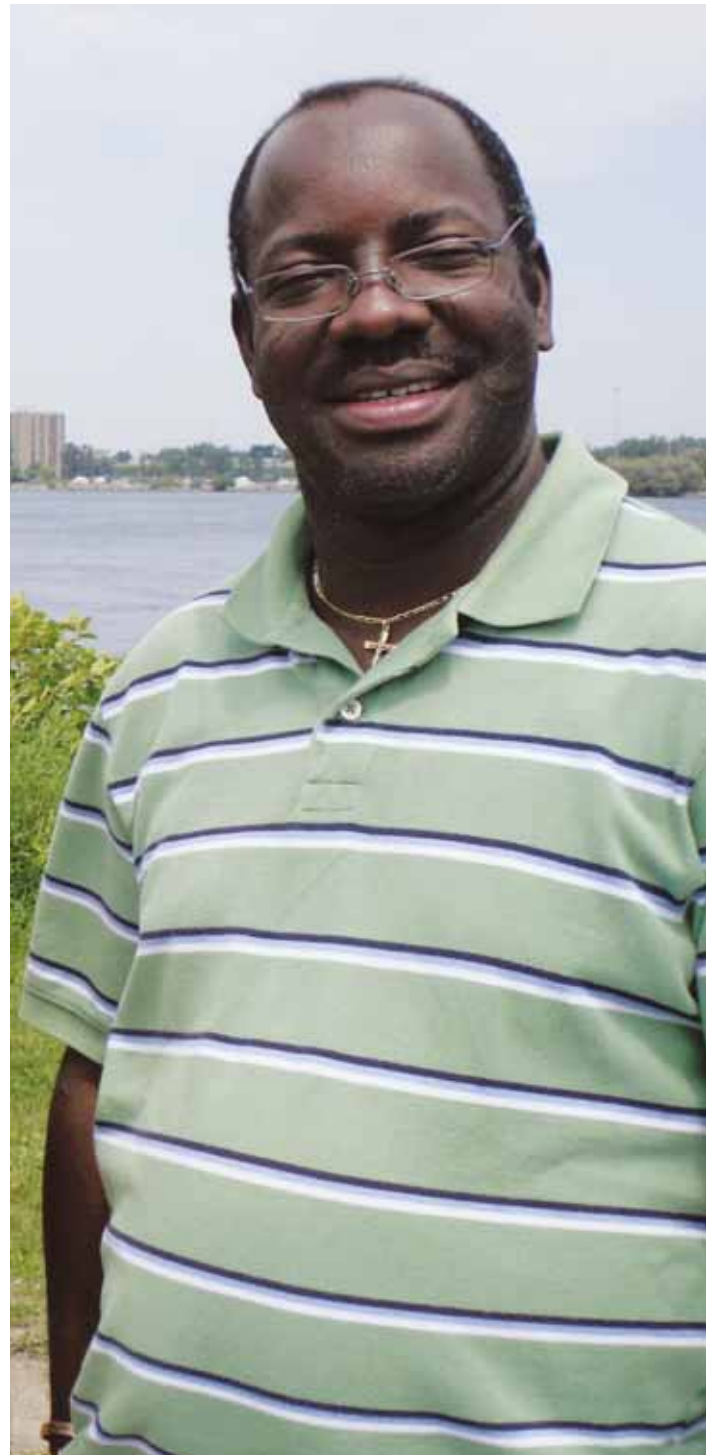
In the short time that I have served as director of VICS, I have been able to make a visit to South Africa, The Gambia and Cameroon. Those visits were meant to get me acquainted with the works of VICS volunteers. They have strengthened my belief that a lot of people are being left behind in this world as we race towards the end of the line of development and comfort. As long as the poor and the needy continue to be part of our world, there will continue to be the need to reach out to them. It is a mission that I am proud to be part of.

As director of VICS, I am responsible for recruiting volunteers to go out to the developing world to make a contribution. We recruit anyone who has anything to contribute to the people in need of development: teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers, agricultural experts, physiotherapists, librarians, social and community development workers, carpenters, mechanics, pilots, and so on.

Another important aspect of my work is fundraising. The volunteers are not paid salaries, but they need to be sent to the mission and brought back home to Canada at the end of their

missions, they need to live in order to be able to make useful contributions, they need to be covered in case of illness. A major part of my work, therefore, is to find the funds for that here in Canada. So, I ask everyone who cares for the cause that we try to address to be part of our VICS family by making donations to VICS.

I am happy to be where I am today and to be able to do what I am doing. My mission as a Spiritan is to those who are in need, and if I am able to do that through VICS, as I think I can, then glory be to God. ■



Farewell Father Troy 1917–2010

Father Michael Troy died during the night. Early enough for Edmonton's morning TV channels and daily papers to feature his passing. The death of this Spiritan was a significant event in the life of his adopted city. He had lived, worked, played, taught and ministered there for forty-five years.

Prior to that he had been the founding Principal of Neil McNeil High School in Toronto and Director of the House of Philosophy at the Spiritan seminary in Dublin. In Edmonton he was chaplain, teacher and coach at St Joseph's High School and the Father Michael Troy Junior High School was named after him.

Wherever he went, he left large footprints behind him. Physically strong, intellectually talented, athletically gifted, this warm-hearted, outgoing priest touched the hearts and minds of teenagers, their parents and grandparents, countless families and thousands of people.

He belonged to the Métis and First Nations communities, the members of the Holy Childhood and the Propagation of the Faith, the Knights of Columbus, the Legion of Mary, and the Canadian Armed Forces Reserves

No wonder St Joseph's Basilica was crowded for the Evening Prayers and overcrowded for the Funeral Mass the following morning. No wonder the *Edmonton Journal* wrote: "The final send-off for Father Michael Troy was not a thing to

miss." No wonder Edmonton Archbishop Richard Smyth said, "The fact that we have gathered here today in such great numbers, in so many different locales is a powerful testament to the blessings God has poured out on his people through the love of Father Michael Troy."

Spiritan has a special reason to be grateful to Father Troy. He was its founding editor and remained in that role from 1983-1994. When its current editors (two were needed to replace its founder) took over, they wrote: "No one person could carry aloft the torch that Michael Troy passes on. The more the team learned about how various issues of *Spiritan Missionary News* were written and published, the more in debt they became to the man who year by year, issue after issue, told the Spiritan story ... Our best expression of gratitude will be to ensure that the high quality of Michael Troy's magazine will not be diminished."

To pray for his eternal "rest" seems somewhat out of character. Instead let us pray that his great, expansive, encouraging, all-encompassing spirit may be in the fullness of eternal life.

An extended tribute to the person, life and accomplishments of Father Troy will be published in the Summer edition of Spiritan.



Fr. Troy's sister, Mary (centre), along with nieces and nephews bid their final farewells.

He was a unique pillar of strength, who towered above us all ... physically, spiritually, emotionally, intellectually and educationally. We shall not see his like again!

Paul-Raymond Wharton, Newmarket, Ontario

Good-bye to a wonderful teacher — who even made religion class interesting.

Iona McGill-Wolstenholme

Even though there were hundreds of students at St. Joseph's High School you took the time to make each and every one of us feel special. I have never met anyone like you and probably never will. You profoundly changed my life, and I will never forget you!

Charlene, Edmonton

As a child I lived for the summer when he would be home and what wonderful adventures he was going to take us on. From mountain climbing to bus tours, I and all the family have such wonderful memories that are so clear it was like yesterday.

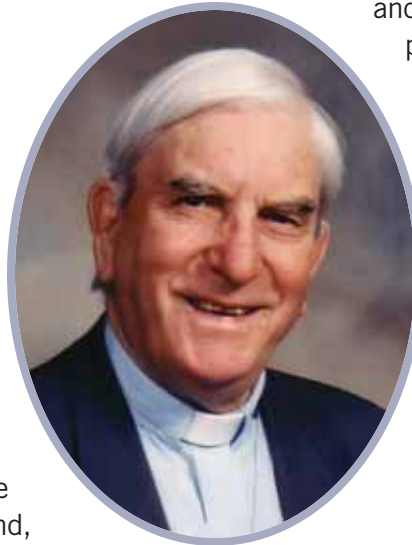
Eilish Coppola, New York

We always considered him "our" Father Troy and were so amazed at the number of people who felt the same way.

Penny LaForge, Edmonton

He was what I wish so many priests in the Catholic church could be, full of laughter, full of genuine smiles and truly concerned about personal well being. He was the real deal.

Karen Kutyn, Edmonton



Fr. Michael Troy and Bishop Shanahan of Nigeria are the two 'giants' of the Irish Spiritan group. Both were big open-hearted men with a genuine love of people. Both have left behind a legacy that will last for years.

Gerald FitzGerald CSSp

I cherish my memories of Father Troy ... the Priest, the Mentor, the Teacher, the Sportsman, the Friend, the Story Teller, the Humanitarian. I am truly blessed, I am a better person for having known Father Troy.

Joan Fedorow (Duff)

His impact on the "regular and ordinary" was profoundly "extraordinary" ... and I am eternally grateful for how special he made each of us "Saints" feel.

Chrissy Pompei Class of '86, Edmonton

Father was a part of our family for well over 40 years. He shared both the happy and the sad times in our lives. He celebrated with us, counselled us, consoled us, laughed with us and loved us. He was never critical or judgemental and he was always there when we needed him. His life and faith were an inspiration to us all.

Marilyn Maguire (MacDonald), Calgary

Somehow we can't see you sitting still in heaven.

Ian Zaharko, Edmonton, Alberta

We former Neil McNeil boys hold Fr. Troy in special esteem. He forever stamped the school with his unique personality, shaping its direction and instilling a lust for life and learning in all of his young charges. We are all better men for having known him.

Jonathan O'Mara

I always loved going to Mass knowing I would see Father Troy. His Sermons were never boring and we always knew that he was going to mention some kind of sport. Father Troy always made us laugh. I will miss his hugs and the hit on the shoulder he would give me. Father Troy would end his Mass saying "The Best is never over, the best is yet to come."

Kerri Helberg, Edmonton

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Fourth

It is dropped, this hint of conversation,
like a plate, clattering noisy
circumlocution until still.
And longer yet the resonant
rhythm echoes in my mind.

We are drying the dinner wineglasses
after a meal of succulent salmon dill
and topics all gristle and bone.
And I can't seem to get my teeth into
this sinking feeling of something
elusive in what you are not saying
as you chatter and wipe and
invert the goblets on their heads.
Was it the pommard or the tension —
taut as guitar strings over frets —
that caused rivulets of conversation
to trickle off into silence
like polished stones?

I am holding the washed-warm
serving platter against my aproned belly,
massaging its dry spine with a dishtowel.
I realize only after the cutlery
is neatly slotted in its groove, the candles
snuffed,
ovenlight snapped off,
that ever since you hinted at the impossibility
of a fourth,
I've been cradling the dish like a child.

— *Kate Marshall Flaherty*

